really are born great, that others achieve

greatness, and that others yet have greatness

thrust upon them. It would show a most

perverse spirit to attempt to dishonor these

propositions. We feel impelled to add to

them, and our amendment would read thus: -

Some men narrowly escape greatness. In

witness whereof consider the case of Justice

Davis, of the United States Supreme Court,

and the Democratic President-mongers, as

recently reported in THE TELEGRAPH.

Although the time for electing another Presi-

dent is yet far distant, the wire-pullers are

already arranging their apparatus and making

ready for their little game. With the Demo-

crats the selection of a candidate is a much

more important matter than the building of a

platform to put him on. The contrary

we believe to be the fact with the Re-

publicans, and this despite the abuses

in the ruling party-abuses that we

have never been timorous in assailing. In

this still great party men must foot the line

of principle, for it is found in even the high-

est places that voters are ready to give up

their most popular representatives rather

than deny the great truths that have made

Republicanism a power. There could be no

greater proof of this than the willingness

shown in some quarters to throw over even

so distinguished a partisan and high candidate

as General Grant. But the question of prin-

ciple is an awkward one with the Democracy,

and one that it would much rather not discuss.

Too many troubleseme facts lie behind

it to make it a profitable matter to

dwell upon. So it seems that already,

and without any further indication of its

policy than can be gathered from the

"address" published a week ago, the Demo-

crats seek to identify some prominent man

with the Presidential movement, and to

run the campaign on an entirely personal

tack. This has been often done, as we all

know-sometimes succeeding, but oftener

shipwrecking all hands concerned. It seems,

further, that the Democrats would rather

than not adopt a gentleman who has hereto-

fore acted with the abused Radicals. The

Scent of the Roses it was thought could be

depended upon to cling around such a person

to some extent still, serving the double end

of nullifying the disagreeable peculiarities of

his new quarters and of drawing wandering

sheep to the deceitful shepherd. Justice

Davis, of the Supreme Court, was supposed to

answer these conditions satisfactorily. He

had been a good enough Republican, and he

was at present a good enough Democrat.

It was thought that Break and Shatter

him as a venial Republican press might,

the old smell would still cling to him to

such a degree that thousands of voters would

in an unlucky season. The worst fortune

that can happen to a man, it is said, is to

have Saturn in his house, ascendant, in the

fourth quarter; and this must have been the

melancholy case with Justice Davis. In a

miserable hour he voted in favor of the con-

stitutionality of the Legal-tender act. The

managers had almost determined upon Justice

Davis, we are told, but after that unaccount-

able action they abandoned him. Do not

# Evening Telegraph

THURSDAY, APRIL 27, 1871.

LIGHT AT LAST-REFORM IN ELEC

THE evils arising from the present system of nominating candidates, and from the frequency of fraudulent returns of the results of elections, are so palpable that every good citizen will hail with pleasure the prospect that effective preventive measures will be adopted. We have repeatedly advocated in these columns the passage of a law throwing legal restraints around delegate elections as an indispensable prerequisite of their improvement. As matters are managed now, no gang of gamblers ever resorted to such notorious, frequent, and despicable cheating as is habitually practised by so-called local leaders of both parties who "carry" the delegates of many divisions and wards. This portion of working politics has sunk from respectability to contempt, and from contempt to crime, until a decent man cannot dabble in it without being mortified at the miserable spectacles of petty rascality which are continually practised, and disheartened by the repeated triumphs of wrong over right. To thieves, blacklegs, rowdies, bummers, and rascals of high and low degree, delegate elections, under the present system, furnish grand occasions for selling their votes, influence, or villainous talents to ambitious and unscrupulous tricksters; while by those who have an honest, intelligent, and disinterested regard for the welfare of the city, State, and nation, they are regarded as the most dangerous excrescence of our governmental system. The only check that has kept them from being absolutely intelerable is the necessity for the ratification of their ultimate results at the polls; and if it were not for this, Philadelphia, under the exclusive rule of the fellows who carry delegate elections, would be reduced to as deplorable a condition as poor Paris under the domination of her infamous Commune.

But it is unnecessary to dwell at length upon the evils of the delegate system as now practised. great question is, Can a remedy be found? Fortunately an affirmative answer to this query can now be confidently given. In California an act throwing legal restraints around delegate elections has been in successful operation for several years. Ohio has also adopted a similar measure, and a modification of the Ohio law was yesterday presented to the Legislature of Pennsylvania by Mr. Reyburn, it having previously been prepared by a sub-committee appointed by the Republican Rules Convention of Philadelphia. In answer to an inquiry made of members of the Ohio Legislature as to how the law had worked in that State, the following reply was recently received: -

"COLUMBUS, April 10, 1871.—Messrs. Rosengarten, Littleton, and Newlin, Committee—Gents:—We are glad that the Ohio primary law is attracting attention in your State. When the bill was first introduced by Colonel Baber, of Franklin, many hesitated at first, because it was a novel measure. It passed the House of Representatives last winter by a large majority, and again this winter, nearly unanimousmajority, and again this winter, hearly unanimously. It was supported on its merit, without regard to
party, and sustained universally by the press and
leading men of our State. The opposition in the
Senate proceeded chiefly from old fogylsm, and
some doubt and prejudice as to its practical workings. The law has been adopted in the spring elections by both the Democratic and Republican parties
in Cincinnati, Columbus, Cleveland, and other places, and has worked satisfactorily in stopping re-peating and other illegitimate practices, and induc-ing substantial citizens to take part in the primary nominations, who heretofore have refused to participate, on the ground that they were mere farces under the old caucus system in our large cities. Perhaps it might be well in your Pennsylvanis law to allow your township judges of election to administer the oath to the inspector and judges named in the primary act, so as to increase the number of officers authorized to administer oaths. think the measure will ultimately be adopted every-

Very respectfully, N. H. Van Verhes, Adams county. LLEWELLYN BABSE, Franklin county. John Little, Green county. D. G. Callen, Mercer county."

The author of the law, Llewellyn Baber, who represents a strong Democratic district, and who describes himself as a strict Democrat, also says that "it has worked admirably against bummerism and the corrupt use of money to contro' elections, the great danger now to our republican institutions." Here, then, is a remedy, favored and

adopted in another State by many good men of both parties, against which there can be no valid objection urged by any class save those who wish to prolong in this community the domination of bummerism, raseality, and corruption; and if the Legislature of Pennsylvania wishes to do a good and creditable thing, it cannot be too prompt in passing a similar law for Pennsylvania. Our readers will see, by a perusal of the bitl (which is published in another portion of to-day's TELE-GRAPH), that it is remarkably well adapted to the existing exigencies.

Another measure now pending in the Legislature aims at the other notorious evil referred to. The Democrats and some of the Republicans of the State Legislature favor a law providing that the returns of the elections of this city shall be counted in the presence of the judges of the Court of Quarter Sessiens. Various amendments of the Registry law are unfortunately complicated with this proposition; but if they are postponed for the present, and attention is concentrated on the reform relating to the manner in which the returns shall be counted, such a measure undoubtedly should, and we earnestly hope it will, be adopted. The violent, infamous, and dangerous scenes which have disgraced the late meetings of return judges should never be repeated, and the proposed remedy will go far to prevent their recurrence. If anything in the whole range of our political system should be done honestly, decently, and in an orderly manner, it is the final count of the election returns which decide who shall control the city. Practically no system can be worse than that now followed, and we know of no better remedy

than that which has been suggested. Let the Legislature pass two laws-one throwing legal restraints around delegate elections, and the other requiring that the

election returns of Philadelphia shall be | THE DEMOCRACY AND JUSTICE DAVIS. counted in the presence of her courts; and it will rejoice the hearts of all good citizens. Politicians who oppose either of these measures will by such opposition only sign their own death-warrants, and they will deserve to perish with the system of bummerism, corruption, and crime that has already been too

THE MILITIA TAX. The militia tax as it now exists is a relic of the days when every able-bodied white male citizen between certain ages was expected to turn out twice a year to learn the rudiments of the art of war; and under our present militia system it is unjust, annoying, and entirely inadequate for the purposes intended in its creation. The old-fashioned "trainings," as everybody that recollects them is well aware, were the merest burlesques, and citizens who had any self-respect refused to turn out with old muskets, blunderbusses, and broomsticks for the purpose of making asses of themselves. Those who did not turn out were liable to a fine, which was never imposed, and which finally, when regular volunteer companies began to be formed, was entirely neglected. This fine was afterwards imposed in the shape of a tax upon those liable to militia duty who did not join the volunteer companies as active members, or who were not exempt on account of service under the United States. After the close of the war persons interested in the reorganization of the various military companies succeeded in having this tax enforced for the benefit of their respective organizations, and the amount obtained was supposed to be divided equitably between the different regiments and companies for the purpose of providing them with arms and equipments and paying their current expenses. The Legislature finally reduced the tax to one dollar per annum, and a collector was appointed to extort it from the unwilling victims. How the tax is collected, and what an unmitigated nuisance it is, the male citizens of Philadelphia are well aware; how it fails to support our militia organization, and hew its collection is managed so that the collector is enabled to make large pecuniary profits by means of the irresponsible power placed in his hands, we demonstrated in a former article. That the tax as at present imposed ought to be abolished admits of no question, but it is nevertheless true that a militia system of some sort ought to be supported by the public. That our present system is the best that could be devised is at least doubtful, but that it is the best possible under existing circumstances is very probable. That the public should be obliged to pay for expensive uniforms and other paraphernalia ought not to be expected, and if our volunteer soldiers wish to indulge in such luxuries they should pay for them out of their own pockets. The public, however, should pay the reasonable expenses of the militia, but the whole burden should not fall upon the comparatively few men who are liable to militia duty, but who do not choose to attach themselves any of the military organizations. If the militia is of any use at all, the entire community is benefited by it, and all the taxables should be compelled to contribute to its support. Any tax authorized for the support of the militia should also be imposed and collected in a regular manner, and its proper distribution ensured by legal enactments that will prevent the misappropriation of any portion of it. A small addition to the annual tax rate of this city would amply provide for the proper support of our militia organizations, and the burden imposed upon each individual tax-payer would be so small as to be almost imperceptible, while its collection would not be attended with the annovances incident to the present system. The militia tax is almost as much a nuisance as the income tax, and the Legislature should seriously consider the propriety of the change we have suggested. It is not right that a

THE people of West Virginia to-day vote at a

special election to determine whether or not

a radical change shall be made in the funda-

mental law regulating the elective frauchise.

The first section of the third article of the

"1. The white male citizens of the State shall be

entitled to vote at all elections held within the elec-tion districts in which they respectively reside, but

no person who is a minor, or of unsound mind, or a pauper, or who is under conviction of treason,

clony, or bribery in an election, or who has not been

felony, or bribery in an election, or who has not been a resident of the State for one year, and of the county in which he offers to vote for thirty days, shall be permitted to vote while such disability continues. No person who since the 1st day of June, 1861, has given, or shall give, voluntary aid or assistance to the Rebellion against the United States, shall be a citizen of this State, or shall be allowed to vote at any election therein, unless he has volunteered into the military or naval service of the United States, and has been, or shall be, honorably discharged therefrom."

For two years past the subject of removing

the political disabilities of ex-Rebels created

by this provision has been earnestly agitated,

and the Republicans have eventually lost con-

trol of the State for a time by general oppo-

sition to the change proposed. The question

to be determined to-day is, whether or not

the portions of the above provision which we

have printed in italies shall be expunged from

the Constitution. The word white is already

rendered invalid by the fifteenth amendment

to the Federal Constitution, and people

of all parties in the State have at last come to

the conclusion that ex-Rebels should have the

same privileges at the ballot-box as are now en-

joyed by their former slaves. The amend-

ment is supported by the Wheeling Intelli-

gencer, the leading Rep ublican organ of the

State, and there is no doubt that it will be

ratified by a large majority. Experience has

taught the Republican party of West Vir-

ginia the wisdom which the Republican members of the National Senate have yet to learn.

State Constitution now reads as follows: -

some men, then, narrowly escape greatness? "FOR THIS TIME ONLY," as the theatrical handbills say, when announcing a rare and novel entertainment, Hon. W. F. Smith yesterday appeared before his colleagues at Harrisburg in the role of an "honest man." The entertainment was as attractive as it was unique, and it naturally excited the laughter of the spectators. Smith's honesty consisted in the solemn avowal that he "did not want a fellow whom \$25 would buy over." His recent declaration that he is henceforth a free man and not for sale was doubtless portion of the community, and that portion prompted by the low price which he combeing in a great measure composed of poor mands at Harrisburg, and his "only" appearmen to whom the tax is a real burden, should ance in the character of an "honest man" was be compelled to support a military establishintended, of course, to give his colleagues on ment that benefits all if it benefits any; and the floor and in the lobby a definite idea of we appeal to our representatives at Harrishow high they must bid if they would buy burg to do justice in the matter. back the freedom which he has asserted. Parties having pneumatic tubes and stonecracking machines to dispose of will take no-AMNESTY INWEST VIRGINIA. tice and act accordingly.

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